

Puzur-Inšušinak and the Oxus Civilization (BMAC): Reflections on Šimaški and the geo-political landscape of Iran and Central Asia in the Ur III period

by **Daniel Potts** – Sydney

For Pierre Amiet, with deepest respect

Two silver vessels – one found near Persepolis in Iran and the other from a grave at Gonur Depe in Turkmenistan – are discussed. Similarities in shape and decoration are highlighted, and a common place of origin is postulated. Three possible areas of origin are examined and the implications of a Central Asian origin are discussed in light of current debates about the historical geography of Iran in the late 3rd millennium B.C.

Introduction

In 1966 workers cleaning out an irrigation canal about 1.5 kms north-west of the terrace at Persepolis (Fig. 1) are said by the late Walther Hinz to have come upon a ceramic vessel containing an unknown number of objects¹. Of these they retained three long bronze pins, a bronze belt buckle with an engraved palm motif, a large number of semi-precious stone beads, and a silver vessel inscribed with one line of Linear Elamite².

¹ A number of colleagues, including J. Alvarez-Mon, N. Boroffka, E. Carter, H.-P. Francfort, C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, B. Lyonnet, O.W. Muscarella, S. Salvatori and P. Steinkeller, were kind enough to read earlier drafts of this paper and to provide me with references and corrections. Needless to say, they did not all agree with the positions adopted here, but I am no less thankful for their very constructive criticisms. I would especially like to thank P.L. Kohl, for photographs and references; B. Lyonnet, for a copy of her unpublished Habilitation; T. Sharlach, for information on the cylinder seal from Gonur; P. Steinkeller, for several relevant papers in advance of publication; and N. Boroffka and S. Hansen (DAI, Eurasien Abteilung), for generously sharing with me their photos from the Ashgabat Museum. For the sake of simplicity I shall refer to this as the Persepolis vessel throughout this article, even though it was found 1.5 kms away from the central part of Persepolis. Sincerest thanks also go to Alejandra Gómez Colorado, Coordinación Nacional de Museos y Exposiciones of the Institute of Anthropology, Mexico City, for facilitating the inclusion here of several photos taken by Mr. Ebrahim Khadem Bayat.

² W. Hinz, *Altiranische Funde und Forschungen* (Berlin 1969) 11. A preliminary communication on the vessel and its inscription was given at the Fifth International Con-

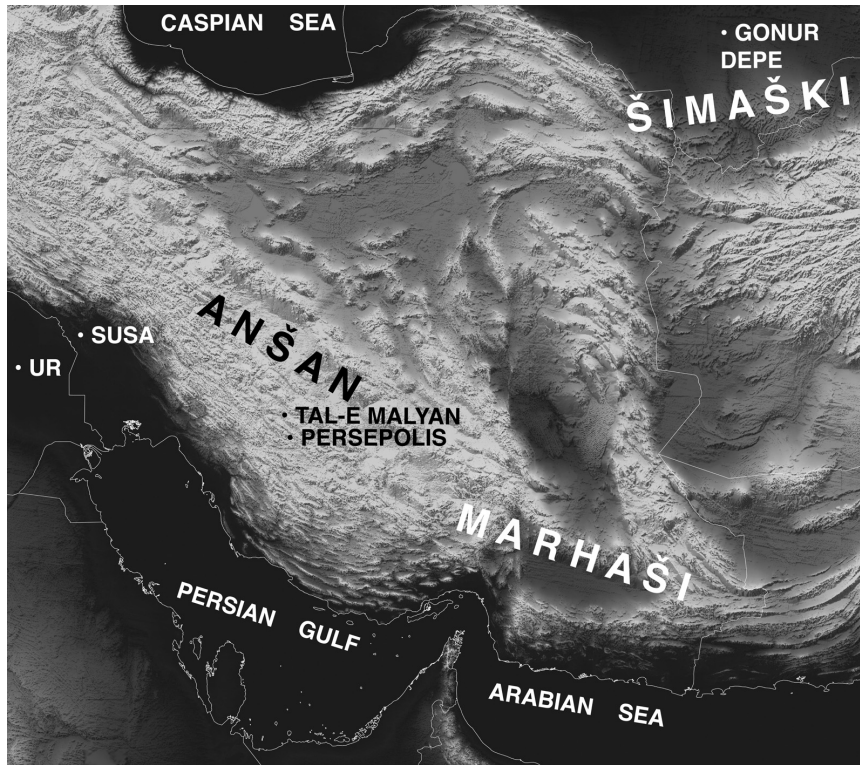


Fig. 1. Map of the main sites and regions discussed in the text.

Now in the Iran National Museum, the vessel (Figs. 2–4) is a tall beaker (19.3 cms. high, 9 cm. rim diameter, 10.5 base diameter, weight 605 gr.), with offset bands running along the base and rim. These two areas are decorated with lightly engraved forms that are probably meant to represent stylized mountains. In relatively high relief, one side of the vessel shows a full-figure, standing female wearing a fleece-like *kaunakes* and a tiara or headband. She holds two flat, rod-like objects, one in either

gress for Iranian Art and Archaeology on 14 April 1968. See W. Hinz, An inscribed ancient Elamite silver vase, in: M.Y. Kiani/A. Tajvidi (eds.), *The Memorial Volume of the Vth International Congress of Iranian Art & Archaeology*, vol. 1 (Tehran-Isfahan-Shiraz 1972) 101. This was followed by R. Ghirshman, *Notes iraniennes XVI. Deux statuettes élamites du Plateau iranien*, *Artibus Asiae* 30 (1968) 243–244, Figs. 10–12. For complete bibliography to 2002, see G.M. Bellelli, *Vasi iranici in metallo dell'Età del Bronzo*. PBF II/17 (Stuttgart 2002) 116, no. 158.



Fig. 2. The Persepolis silver vessel showing the full-length female (courtesy Institute of Anthropology, Mexico City, and Ebrahim Khadem Bayat).



Fig. 3. The Persepolis silver vessel showing the seated female
(courtesy Institute of Anthropology, Mexico City, and Ebrahim Khadem Bayat).



Fig. 4. Detail of the seated female on the Persepolis vessel (after Persia: fragmentos del paraíso: Tesoros del Museo Nacional de Irán/Persia: fragments from Paradise: Treasures from the National Museum of Iran [Mexico City 2007] 50).

hand, that somewhat resemble headless sceptres³. The front parts of her feet, shown in profile, protrude from the base of her dress. The opposite side of the vessel shows a second, seated female, similarly attired in a fleece-like *kaunakes*, but with long flowing hair and a braid or hairband set high on her head. She also wears a three-strand necklace and a single bracelet on her exposed, right wrist. Her toes, shown with much more definition than the feet of the standing figure, protrude from the folds of her *kaunakes*. Because of a perceived parallel between these figures and a statue of the seated goddess Narunde from Susa, both Ghirshman and Hinz identified the standing figure with this Elamite deity⁴.

Of greatest interest for Hinz, however, was the one-line, Linear Elamite inscription that ran around the upper part of the vessel (to which he gave the siglum Q)⁵, interrupted only by the head of the standing female. Hinz's proposed decipherment of the text led him to identify the seated female as a priestess, whose name he read tentatively as Kuri-Nahiti, in the service of Narunde. In spite of its uniqueness at the time⁶, Hinz's firm

³ Hinz, *Altiranische Funde*, 17, „Ich vermag diese Gegenstände vorläufig nicht zu deuten; sie wirken wie Zeichen überirdischer Macht“. Stone sceptres are known in eastern Iran and Central Asia (N. Boroffka/E. Sava, *Zu den steinernen „Zeptern/Stöbel-Zeptern“, „Miniatursäulen“ und „Phalli“ der Bronzezeit Eurasiens*, *AMIT* 30 (1998) 17–113; Abb. 9 and 35) but the flatness of the objects shown on the vessel makes it unlikely that these are illustrated here. P. Calmeyer, *Beobachtungen an der Silbervase aus Persepolis*, *IrAnt* 24 (1989) 81, suggested, „Zu den beiden stabförmigen Gebilden in ihren Händen, deren eines (in der Linken) deutlich geschwungen ist, kenne ich keine schlagenden Parallelen. Sollten es Klangstäbe sein, wie die längeren, leicht geknickten, die von tanzenden Männern auf altbabylonischen Terrakottareliefs gehalten werden?“

⁴ Speaking of the two female figures on this vessel, P. Calmeyer, *IrAnt* 24 (1989) 83, noted, „Die Figuren sind weniger parataktisch als die älteren mesopotamischen, vielschichtiger als die ‚baktrischen‘, diese und auch die oft verglichene sitzende Göttin Narunde des Kutikinšušinak aus Susa wirken ihnen gegenüber als provinziell“.

⁵ Aside from Hinz's lengthy discussion of the corpus of Linear Elamite inscriptions, these have been discussed more recently by F. Vallat, *The most ancient scripts of Iran: The current situation*, *World Archaeology* 17 (1986) 339–345; cf. B. André/M. Salvini, *Réflexions sur Puzur-Inšušinak*, *IrAnt* 24 (1989) 53–72. See now <http://cdli.ucla.edu/wiki/index.php/Linear-Elamite>. J. Dahl (pers. comm.) has expressed some reservations about the authenticity of the inscription on the Persepolis vessel. I am not competent to pass judgement in this matter. In light of the discussion below, however, there can be no doubt that the vessel itself is genuine. Whether the account given to Hinz can be believed, I cannot say. O.W. Muscarella has expressed his doubts about it to me, but even if the vessel did not come from the Persepolis region, the main thrust of this article is not thereby adversely affected.

⁶ Hinz, *Altiranische Funde*, 11, and Calmeyer both referred to unnamed European archaeologists as expressing doubts about the authenticity of the object because, as P. Calmeyer, *IrAnt* 24 (1989) 80, put it, „Zahlreiche Eigenheiten des Bechers und seine Reliefs waren damals in der Kunst des Alten Orients unbekannt“.

belief in the inscription's authenticity, combined with the circumstances of the vessel's discovery, which he investigated in 1967, led him to reject any suggestion that the object was a forgery.

Indeed, any doubts of the vessel's authenticity that might have been caused by the unfamiliar iconography of the female figures were gradually dispelled as iconographic comparanda for the *kaunakes*-wearing seated female figure came to light in two different locales. First, similarly attired, seated females appeared on seals and seal impressions found at ancient Anšan (Tal-e Malyan) in the Marv Dasht plain of Fars in the early 1970's, demonstrating that this was most likely the source of a series of cylinder seals from the early excavations at Susa, termed 'popular Elamite' by P. Amiet in 1972⁷ and later re-named 'Anšanite'⁸. Second, the same type of seated and attired female appeared on compartmented stamp seals and in the form of composite statuettes of 'Bactrian' type⁹ which scholars quickly realised were strikingly reminiscent of those on the Persepolis vessel¹⁰. Nevertheless, it was not until 2004 that another vessel of similar shape and style came to light.

The silver vessel from Gonur Depe, tomb 3220

In 2004 a silver vessel (Figs. 5–6) was discovered amongst a cache of objects in 'royal' tomb 3220 at Gonur Depe in the Murghab River delta

⁷ P. Amiet, *Glyptique susienne*. MDP 43 (1972) 239.

⁸ P. Amiet, *Antiquités de serpentine*, *IrAnt* 15 (1980) 165–166.

⁹ I use the term 'Bactrian' in inverted commas to distinguish between objects from the antiquities market that are deemed on stylistic and iconographic grounds to have come from Bactria, and those found at actual excavations in Bactria (northern Afghanistan/southern Uzbekistan), which are called Bactrian without the inverted commas. More recently discussed at length by A. Benoit, *Les 'princesses' de Bactriane*, *Revue du Louvre* (2004/4) 39–41 and Fig. 7a-b.

¹⁰ E.g. P. Amiet, *Bactriane proto-historique*, *Syria* 54 (1977) 103–105; *Iconographie de la Bactriane proto-historique*, *AnSt* 33 (1983) 25–26; H. Pittman, *Art of the Bronze Age: Southeastern Iran, Western Central Asia and the Indus Valley* (New York 1984) 50. AO 31881, an unprovenanced, silver pyxis with accompanying lid in the Louvre, is decorated with seated females wearing *kaunakes*-type garments in high *repoussé* relief. Although the pyxis shape is unlike that of the Persepolis vessel, the seated females are virtually identical to the one on the Persepolis vessel. See Benois, *Revue du Louvre* (2004/4), Fig. 8a-b; P. Amiet, *Art de cour de Margiane-Bactriane*, *Revue du Louvre* (2005/2) 29–36; P. Amiet, *L'âge des échanges inter-iraniens*, in: G. Ligabue/G. Rossi-Osmida (eds.), *Sulla Via delle Oasi: Tesori Dell'Oriente Antico* (Florence 2007) 64–87 Fig. 17.



Fig. 5. The Gonur silver vessel (photo taken by N. Boroffka, May 2006, courtesy of the Eurasia-Department, DAI, Berlin).

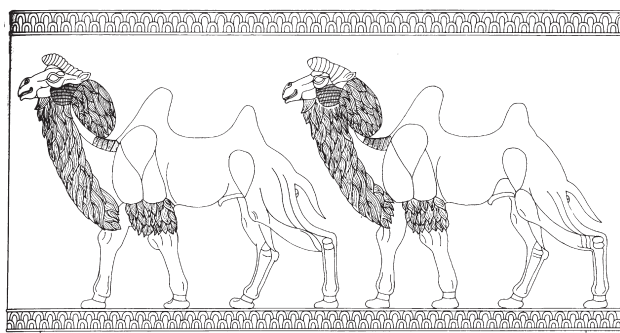


Fig. 6. Drawing of the Gonur Depe vessel (from Sarianidi, *Gonurdepe, city of kings and gods*, 237).

(Achaemenid Marguš or Margiana)¹¹. Although its precise dimensions have not been published, the Gonur vessel's shape is very similar to that of the Persepolis vessel¹². The vessel is decorated with images of two, virtually identical, striding Bactrian camels in low relief with carefully delineated tufts of hair on the neck and upper left leg. In addition, an in-

¹¹ V.I. Sarianidi, *Goñurdepe, city of kings and gods* (Aşgabat 2005) 250–252 and Figs. 95–97. The tomb is said to have been constructed as a three-room structure (chambers 1–3) with a corridor (chamber 4) within a large foundation pit that resembled the layout of a “common dwelling house”. The vessel in question was one of twenty-four (five copper-bronze, seventeen silver and two gold) discovered in a 1 × 1 m. “hiding place” dug into the natural soil below the tomb's floor, but the description of the findspot is difficult to follow. Cf. V. I. Sarianidi, *Royal necropolis in North Gonur*, VDI 2006/2 (2006) 155–192; illustrated in P. L. Kohl, *The making of Bronze Age Eurasia* (Cambridge 2007) Fig. 5.12c. For earlier publications on the Gonur cemetery, see S. Salvatori, *The discovery of the graveyard of Gonur-Depe 1 (Murghab Delta, Turkmenistan): 1992 campaign, preliminary report*, *Rivista di Archeologia* 17 (1993) 5–13; G. Rossi-Osmida (ed.), *Margiana Gonur-depe necropolis: 10 years of excavations by Ligabue Study and Research Centre* (Florence 2002); S. Salvatori, *Pots and peoples: The ‘Pandora’s jar’ of Central Asia archaeological research. On two recent books on Gonur graveyard excavations*, *Rivista di Archeologia* 27 (2003) 5–20; N. A. Dubova, *Graveyard and royal necropolis on the large pool’s banks of North Gonur*, in: M. F. Kosarev/P. M. Kozhin/N. A. Dubova (eds.), *Near the sources of civilizations: The issue in honor of the 75-anniversary of Victor Sarianidi* (Moscow 2004) 254–281 (in Russian). Unfortunately, although the most recent publication, V. Sarianidi, *Necropolis of Gonur* (Athens 2007), presents evidence from almost 3000 excavated graves (1–2944), the graves investigated subsequent to these, such as tomb 3220, are not described.

¹² A photo showing V. I. Sarianidi holding the vessel in 2004 suggests it is much larger than the Persepolis vessel, possibly on the order of 30 or 35 cms tall. See Kosarev/Kozhin/Dubova, *Near the sources of civilizations*, 26.



Fig. 7. Detail of the rim of the Gonur Depe vessel (photo taken by N. Boroffka, May 2006, courtesy of the Eurasia-Department, DAI, Berlin).

cised Bactrian camel shown in profile adorns the base of the vessel¹³. The animals on the side of the vessel are framed by two identical bands of what appear like lightly engraved, stylized mountains on the raised borders at the rim (Fig. 7) and base of the vessel (the lower band forming a groundline for the camels). The borders are so like those on the Persepolis vessel that one is tempted to suggest the two pieces came from the same workshop. Similar, stylized mountain shapes appear in mosaic form in tomb 3210¹⁴. Although the raised figures which decorate the Gonur vessel are Bactrian camels rather than females, the treatment of the tufts of camel hair on the neck (Fig. 8) and upper leg closely mirrors the rendition of the individual tufts of fleece on the *kaunakes* of the figures on the Persepolis vessel. In short, these similarities suggest that the Persepolis and Gonur vessels come from a common source, a topic to which we shall turn below. Before doing so, however, a further link between Gonur Depe and the Persepolis vessel which is of both chronological and cultural interest should be noted.

In 1994 I.S. Klochkov discovered a sherd on the surface of Gonur Depe which was incised with two clear signs and the beginning of a third (Figs. 9–10)¹⁵. He compared the signs to those incised on a sherd from

¹³ Sarianidi, Goñurdepe, 252, makes it clear that this is the case and suggests the camel, sometimes accompanied by an incised bow (string up, bow frame down) above it, may have been a maker's mark left by the craftsman who made the vessel. Such incised camels occur on a number of gold and silver vessels from Gonur but, unfortunately, it is not possible to tell whether one of the five vessel bases shown in Fig. 97 (p. 238) belongs to the vessel under discussion here.

¹⁴ Sarianidi, Goñurdepe, 226, Fig. 87.

¹⁵ I.S. Klochkov, Signs on a potsherd from Gonur (On the question of the script used in Margiana), *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 5/2 (1998) Fig. 1.



Fig. 8. Detail of the treatment of the tufts of hair on one of the Gonur Depe vessel camels (photo taken by N. Boroffka, May 2006, courtesy of the Eurasia-Department, DAI, Berlin).

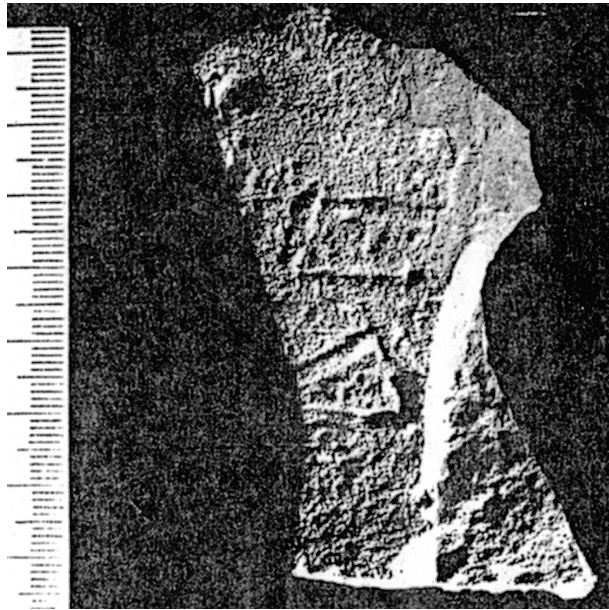


Fig. 9. Photo of the sherd from Gonur Depe with Linear Elamite signs (after Klochkov, *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 5/2 [1998], Fig. 1).

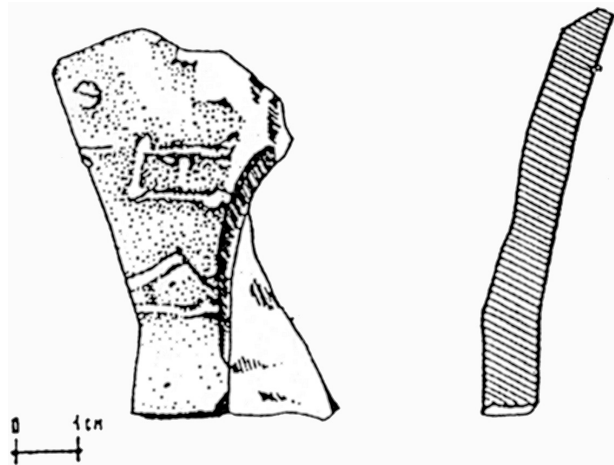


Fig. 10. Drawing of the sherd from Gonur Depe with Linear Elamite signs (after Klochkov, *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 5/2 [1998], Fig. 1).

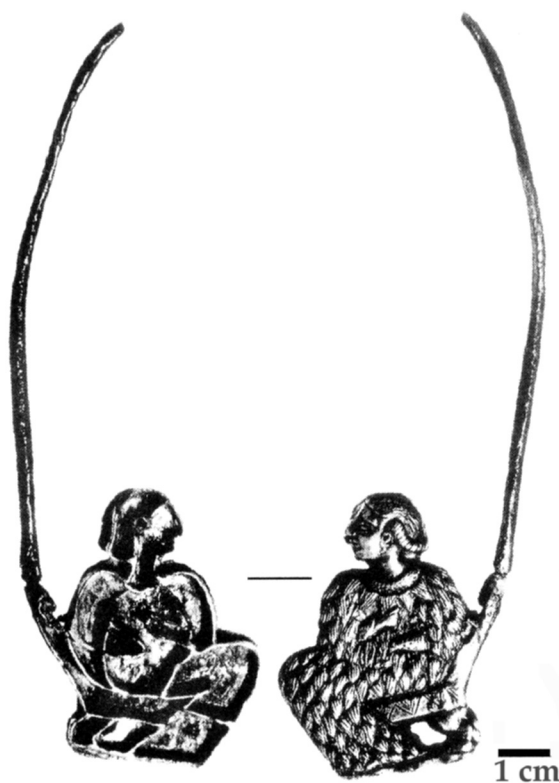


Fig. 11. Silver seated female pin from Gonur Depe (after Sarianidi, *Margiana and Protozoroastrism*, Fig. 34).

Shahdad, in eastern Iran, which in turn had been identified as Linear Elamite as long ago as 1971¹⁶. In seeking to put the Gonur sherd and its Linear Elamite text into perspective, Klochkov noted that an elaborate silver seal-pin from Gonur depicted a seated female wearing a typically 'Bactrian' *kaunakes*-type garment (Fig. 11), which bore a striking resemblance to those worn by the two female figures on the Persepolis vessel¹⁷

¹⁶ W. Hinz, *Eine altelamische Tonkrug-Aufschrift vom Rande der Lut*, AMI 4 (1971) 21–24. Cf. Vallat, *The most ancient scripts*, 343. Given the fact that only two signs and the beginning of a third can be seen, J. Dahl (pers. comm.) has suggested to me that the identification of this inscription as Linear-Elamite cannot be taken as confirmed.

¹⁷ Others made a similar observation virtually at the same time, e.g. S. Winkelmann, *Bemerkungen zum Grab 18 und den Silbernadeln von Gonur depe*, AMIT 30 (1998) 1–16; 12, who spoke of the 'stilistische Einheit der Darstellungen auf der Silbervase von Persepolis und der Silbernadel von Gonur'.



Fig. 12. Detail of the right hand of the seated female on the Persepolis vessel.



Fig. 13. Detail of the right hand of the seated female on the Gonur pin.

which, as noted, also bears a Linear Elamite inscription. Moreover, although the Gonur female is facing left, the depiction of her right hand, with its offset thumb, emerging from the sleeve of her *kaunakes*, is reminiscent of the right hand of the seated female on the Persepolis vessel¹⁸ (Figs. 12–13).

Klochkov was principally concerned with the implications of the presence of Linear Elamite at Gonur for the dating of the site, which he felt was supported by cross-dating with the Persepolis vessel, and which he assigned to the last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C. Although he pointed to the clear iconographic parallels between the female figures shown on the Persepolis vessel and the pin from Gonur, noting that it could ‘hardly be coincidental’, Klochkov was most interested in using these finds to argue that, at this time, “Margiana was within the sphere of Elamite cultural influence, even if it were not linked to the Elamite world by anything stronger, by ‘blood-ties’”¹⁹. Thus, for Klochkov, the iconography of the females on the Persepolis vessel; the iconography of the female depicted on the Gonur silver pin; and the presence of Linear Elamite texts at both sites, provided strong evidence of a link between Margiana and the Elamite world.

¹⁸ It is also identical to the protruding right hands and forearms shown on AO 31881 in the Louvre. See A. Benois, *Revue du Louvre* (2004/4), Fig. 8a-b; P. Amiet, *Revue du Louvre* (2005/2) 29–36; P. Amiet, *L’âge des échanges inter-iraniens*, Fig. 17.

¹⁹ Klochkov, *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 5/2 (1998) 172. Similarly, Hinz had argued in 1971 that the presence of a sherd (part of a vessel found in a grave) with a Linear Elamite inscription at Shahdad raised the question of whether Anšan, with which he linked Puzur-Inšušinak and Linear Elamite, extended eastwards as far as the edge of the Dašt-e Lut. For a copy and photograph of the inscription, see F. T. Hiebert/C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, *Central Asia and the Indo-Iranian borderlands*, Iran 30 (1992) Fig. 4.

Interpreting the link between the Persepolis and Gonur vessels

The iconographic and stylistic similarities between the Persepolis and Gonur vessels are strong enough to suggest a common source, or at least a common cultural milieu²⁰, and the question naturally arises: where might that have been? At the moment, there seem to be three possibilities, each of which deserves to be examined critically. For the sake of brevity we may call these the Awanite (§1), the Anšanite (§2) and the Central Asian (§3) hypotheses.

§1. The Awanite hypothesis

In a brief observation on Linear Elamite and Puzur-Inšušinak, P. Amiet expressed doubt that this writing system had been invented at Susa. Rather, he thought it far more likely to have been a creation “d’une civilisation spécifique, proprement élamite, vraisemblablement dans la capitale de la dynastie d’Awan, dont nous ignorons l’emplacement”²¹. Several years later, this observation, combined with the presence of the Linear Elamite inscription on the Persepolis vessel, led P. Calmeyer to suggest that, in spite of numerous technical, stylistic and iconographic parallels with ‘Bactrian’ material, the Persepolis vessel “zeugt von jener sich von Südmesopotamien aus verbreitenden Klassik, die P. Amiet *l’humanisme néo-sumerien* genannt hat; zugleich mit der Schrift, die es begleitet, ist es auch ein Zeugnis für ein hauptstädtisches Selbstbewußtsein, das der späten Dynastie von Awan, wo immer deren Zentrum gelegen haben mag: unabhängig vom mehrfach besetzten Susa, ja sogar im Gegensatz zu diesem”²². Thus, whereas Amiet had merely suggested that Linear Elamite was an invention of Awan’s, Calmeyer identified the Persepolis vessel as a product of Awan, noting additionally that Susa had been occupied too often by Mesopotamian powers to have been the locus of production of a vessel with this sort of iconography.

The logic employed here can therefore be summarised in the following set of propositions: the Persepolis vessel bears a Linear-Elamite in-

²⁰ In spite of the fact that Gonur Depe is an enormous site, at which Sarianidi has opened up vast areas of architecture, we cannot rule out the possibility that the vessel from grave 3220 was not made there, but at another, culturally similar site in the Murghab River region, or even further afield within the Bactrian-Margiana region.

²¹ P. Amiet, *L’âge des échanges inter-iraniens, 3500–1700 avant J.-C.* (Paris 1986) 158.

²² Calmeyer, *IrAnt* 24 (1989) 83. Followed by Bellelli, *PBf* II/17, 117.

scription; Linear Elamite was, as far as we know, a creation of Puzur-Inšušinak's (or his court); Puzur-Inšušinak was a king of Awan; *ergo*, the vessel was probably produced in his dynastic capital in Awan, i.e. his power base before assuming control over Susa and Elam²³.

At first glance this line of reasoning makes sense. However, it is by no means certain that the manufacture *and* inscribing of the Persepolis vessel took place more or less simultaneously, or in the same place. Given the nature of the *repoussé* decoration on these vessels, it is difficult to compare the treatment of the figures on them with the technique used to engrave the inscription. However, if one looks closely at the lightly incised, stylised mountains in the upper and lower borders of these two vessels, and compares these with the Linear Elamite inscription on the Persepolis example, it does seem that the borders and the inscription were engraved in two quite different manners. This could suggest that the object, wherever it was made, was originally uninscribed, and that the inscription was added sometime after manufacture by a craftsman using different sorts of tools²⁴. It is certainly possible that this object was manufactured in one place; then traded, given as a gift, received as tribute or seized as booty, ending up in another place, conceivably far from its locus of production; and eventually inscribed – perhaps with a dedicatory or commemorative inscription – at or near its eventual place of use and ultimate archaeological deposition. Thus, even if Linear Elamite was an invention of Puzur-Inšušinak's or his scribes, and originated in Awan, the fact that the Persepolis vessel bears a Linear Elamite inscription implies nothing about the ultimate locus of its production.

²³ Some years ago, based on the plethora of ceramic and other links between Susa, Tepe Musiyan, Tepe Aliabad, Tepe Farukhabad, sites in the Diyala and the Hamrin, I suggested that Awan may have lain in Luristan (central western Zagros and Pušt-i Kuh). See D.T. Potts, *The archaeology of Elam: Formation and transformation of an ancient Iranian state* (Cambridge 1999) 97–98. Cf. H. Pittman, The 'Jeweler's' seal from Susa and the art of Awan, in: E. Ehrenberg (ed.), *Leaving no stones unturned: Essays on the Ancient Near East and Egypt in honor of Donald P. Hansen* (Winona Lake 2002) 211–235.

²⁴ One could, of course, argue that the maker of the vessel, who engraved the stylised mountains, used different tools from those employed by the craftsman who added the inscription, just as nowadays the maker of a metal trophy might not employ the same tools as the person who engraves the name of its winner.

§2. The Anshanite hypothesis

As noted above, the iconography of the seated female on the Persepolis vessel, in particular, recalls not only 'Bactrian' composite female statuettes, but females on early *sukkalmah*-period seals²⁵. While most of the known exemplars come from the art market, several seal impressions and at least one stamp seal found at Tal-e Malyan, capital of ancient Anshan, show comparably attired, seated females²⁶. Based on this evidence, one could suggest that the silver vessels might have been products of a local workshop in Anshan, either in the capital itself (Tal-e Malyan) or somewhere else in the the land of Anshan.

The period in which the Persepolis vessel was made and inscribed, shortly before or around 2100 B.C., falls within the Early Kaftari period (c. 2200–1900 B.C.) at Tal-e Malyan, as defined by the excavator, W. M. Sumner²⁷. A Bayesian analysis of the stratified radiocarbon dates from the site suggests more particularly that the Early Kaftari period dated to c. 2140–1900 B.C.²⁸, therefore close to and possibly coterminous with Puzur-Inšušinak's reign²⁹. At this time Tal-e Malyan was approaching its greatest areal extent, c. 130 ha. within a perimeter wall enclosing 200 ha. by the Middle Kaftari period (c. 1900–1800 B.C.), and

²⁵ A link between the two – seated females on a cylinder seal of Ebarat I or II and the composite 'Bactrian' female statuettes – was noted by Amiet already in 1977. See Amiet, *Syria* 54 (1977) 105–107.

²⁶ H. Pittman, *Reconsidering the Trouville de la statuette d'or: Late sukkalmah period at Susa*, in: N. F. Miller/K. Abdi (eds.), *Yeki bud, yeki nabud: Essays on the archaeology of Iran in honor of William M. Sumner* (Los Angeles 2003) Fig. 15.15; E. Porada, *More seals of the time of the sukkalmah*, *RA* 84 (1990) 171–178; Fig. 6. At least one example is known from Susa: See P. Amiet, *Quelques sceaux élamites*, in: H. Gasche/M. Tanret/C. Janssen/A. Degraeve (eds.), *Cinquante-deux réflexions sur le Proche-Orient ancien offertes en hommage à Léon De Meyer* (Gent 1994) 60 and Fig. 2, 'Un sceau-cylindre Anshanite à Suse'.

²⁷ W.M. Sumner, *Anshan in the Kaftari phase: Patterns of settlement and land use*, in: L. De Meyer/E. Haerincx (eds.), *Archaeologia Iranica et Orientalis: Miscellanea in honorem Louis Vanden Berghe* (Gent 1989) 135–161. Cf. N.F. Miller/W.M. Sumner, *The Banesh-Kaftari interface. The view from Operation H5, Malyan, Iran* 41 (2003) 17.

²⁸ C.A. Petrie/A. Asgari Chaverdi/M. Seyedin, *From Anshan to Dilmun and Magan: The spatial and temporal distribution of Kaftari and Kaftari-related ceramic vessels*, *Iran* 43 (2005) 55 and Table 3.

²⁹ This is not the place to discuss the ramifications of the absolute chronology of the Early Kaftari period in Fars for Mesopotamian chronology but it is clear that the dates of the Ur III period and, by extension, of Puzur-Inšušinak, would be subsumed by the C14 dates from Tal-e Malyan's Early Kaftari deposits.

archaeological sites with Kaftari or Kaftari-related ceramics were widespread throughout western Fars, extending from Tol-e Nurabad and Tol-e Spid in the Mamasani district of western Fars³⁰ to the Lama cemetery near Yasuj in the Kuhgilouye va Boyrahmad region to the north³¹; down to the Persian Gulf coast at Tul-e Peytul (Elamite Liyan), near modern Bushehr³², and into Laristan, around Tol-e Pir and Tol-e Rokhnabad³³.

Nevertheless, several points argue against the likelihood of these silver vessels having been manufactured in Anšan. To begin with, the Gonur vessel is decorated with Bactrian camels, an animal otherwise unknown in the iconography of the glyptic from Tal-e Malyan (see below). Furthermore, apart from the glyptic depictions of females wearing the *kaunakes* at Tal-e Malyan, which are characteristic of the *sukkalmah* period, the freestanding statuettes with which they have so often been compared are all, seemingly, of Central Asian origin. Although two typically ‘Bactrian’ statuettes of females wearing the *kaunakes* (then in the Foroughi Collection), published in 1968 by Ghirshman and compared by him with those shown on the Persepolis silver vessel³⁴, were initially said to have come from Fars, it was later revealed that the dealer who sold the pieces to M. Foroughi had actually said they were “more likely to have come from the north or from Afghanistan”³⁵. Finally, there are no other comparable examples of silver vessels from Tal-e Malyan or any other site in Fars. In sum, these considerations suggest that the Persepolis vessel was not an Anšanite product.

³⁰ See now the evidence of extensive, stratified Kaftari material from Tol-e Nurabad and Tol-e Spid in the Mamasani district of western Fars, D. T. Potts/K. Roustaei (eds.), *The Mamasani Archaeological Project Stage One: A report on the first two seasons of the ICAR – University of Sydney Expedition to the Mamasani District, Fars Province, Iran* (Tehran 2006) 66, 106–110, 155, 178–180.

³¹ H. Rezvani/K. Roustaei/A. Azadi/K. Alamdari, *Lama ancient cemetery* (Yasuj 2006) 18, 25, 28–30.

³² D. T. Potts, *Anshan, Liyan and Magan circa 2000 BCE*, in: N.F. Miller/K. Abdi (eds.), *Yeki bud, yeki nabud: Essays on the archaeology of Iran in honor of William M. Sumner* (Los Angeles 2003) 156–159.

³³ My thanks to Alireza Askari Chaverdi who showed me these sites in January, 2008.

³⁴ Ghirshman, *Artibus Asiae* 30 (1968) 237–243 and Figs. 1–8.

³⁵ M.-H. Pottier, *Matériel funéraire de la Bactriane méridionale de l’âge du Bronze* (Paris 1984) 45, cf. E. Porada, *Some seals of the time of the sukkalmah*, *RA* 84 (1990) 176, n. 23.

§3. The Central Asian hypothesis

The discovery of one of the vessels under discussion at Gonur Depe in a cemetery that yielded a number of other silver vessels³⁶ justifies our considering Gonur itself or another culturally similar site belonging to the BMAC (Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex) or ‘Oxus civilization’³⁷ as a candidate for the source of this vessel type. Excavations at Gonur Depe and elsewhere in Turkmenistan (Margiana), northern Afghanistan and southern Uzbekistan (Bactria) during the past 30 years have brought to light what is now considered by many scholars to be a ‘new’ Bronze Age civilization, broadly centred on the Oxus (Amu Darya) and Syr Darya, and on the Tedžen and Murghab Rivers³⁸. With impressive sites like Gonur Depe, Altyn Depe, Sapalli, Dashly 3, Dzharkutan and Togolok³⁹; evidence of large-scale metallurgical, ceramic and stone vessel production; striking iconography, as displayed in both statuary and glyptic; and settlement patterns consistent with an urbanized society supported by a well-developed agricultural sector, the only major criterion of urban ‘civilization’ missing – in the sense in which V. Gordon Childe conceived the term – is writing⁴⁰.

³⁶ Other silver vessels from the tombs at Gonur are illustrated in Rossi-Osmida, *Margiana*, 86, 120, 122, 127.

³⁷ A term coined by H.-P. Francfort, *The early periods of Shortughai (Harappan) and the western Bactrian culture of Dashly*, in: B. Allchin (ed.), *South Asian Archaeology 1981* (Cambridge 1984) 174. Cf. H.-P. Francfort, *La civilisation de l’Oxus et les Indo-Iraniens et Indo-Aryens en Asie Centrale*, in: G. Fussman/J. Kellens/H.-P. Francfort/X. Tremblay, *Āryas, Aryens et Iraniens en Asie Centrale* (Paris 2005) 253–328.

³⁸ Kohl, *The making of Bronze Age Eurasia*, 188–189.

³⁹ For an excellent overview of the architecture of these impressive sites, see D. Huff, *Urbanisierungsansätze in Zentralasien*, in: H. Falk (ed.), *Wege zur Stadt: Entwicklung und Formen urbanen Lebens in der alten Welt* (Bremen 2005) 82–120.

⁴⁰ For some scholars, the incised clay tokens from Gonur North, published in Sarianidi, *Margiana and Protozoroastrism*, Fig. 41, or the signs attested at Altyn Depe, Khapuz Depe and Taichanak Depe in southern Turkmenistan, published in V.M. Masson/V.I. Sarianidi, *Central Asia: Turkmenia before the Achaemenids* (London 1972) Fig. 31, constitute evidence of an incipient, indigenous system of writing. See S. Salvatori, *Oxus Civilisation cultural variability in the light of its relations with surrounding regions: The Middle Bronze Age*, in: M.F. Kosarev/P.M. Kozhin/N.A. Dubova (eds.), *Near the sources of civilizations: The issue in honor of the 75-anniversary of Victor Sarianidi* (Moscow 2004) 98. V. Sarianidi, *Marguş: Ancient Oriental kingdom in the Old Delta of the Murghab river* (Aşgabat 2002) 333–334, has suggested that an incised Akkadian or Ur III cylinder seal found at Gonur Depe in 2001 and showing a contest scene with a worn legend, tentatively read by T. Sharlach as

As noted above, parallels between the female figures on the Persepolis vessel and female statuettes of ‘Bactrian’ type were noted decades ago by Amiet, Calmeyer, Porada and Pittman, and while most of the statuettes of this type have no known provenience and come from the antiquities market, the first example found in a controlled excavation was in fact discovered in the cemetery at Gonur North (Fig. 15)⁴¹, where the silver vessel was also found (though not in the same grave). A second, frag-

[name of king]	[1]u ₂ -KA-X
[title]	[s]agi
[title ...]	arad ₂ -z[u]

“(RN, titles) – Lú-XXX, cup-bearer, (is) your servant”, proves that the Oxus Civilization was literate. This important find is more likely to be an import, however, than a local imitation of an Akkadian seal. My sincere thanks to Dr. T. Sharlach (Oklahoma State Univ., Stillwater), for providing me with a copy of the relevant pages of Sarianidi’s publication in which her reading is published and for subsequent communication on the text. Salvatori, *Rivista di Archeologia* 27 (2003) 9, notes, “The seal is of paramount importance because it is not post-Akkadian, as Sarianidi states, but Akkadian post-Sargonid and stylistically peripheral, possibly from Elam”. P. Steinkeller (pers. comm.), on the other hand, has suggested to me that this is an Ur III seal. The precise dating makes no great difference here, but an Ur III date would be consistent with all of the other circumstances discussed below. The seal is also illustrated in V.I. Sarianidi, *Necropolis of Gonur* (2007) 107, where reference is made to a personal communication from N. Kozlova of the Hermitage Museum suggesting that “the seal ... bears a standard Sumerian inscription that dates to about the XXII c. B.C.”

⁴¹ E.g. Rossi-Osmida, *Margiana*, 68, 104–105, 108, “composite statuette in steatite” from a “pseudo-catacomb grave” 1799/2001 (burial of a female c. 30–35 years old), about which the author writes, “This is the first time that this type of statuette, typical of the Oxus culture, has been found in place”. The dimensions are as follows: height (incl. head), 8.7 cms.; width of base, 9.8 cms. Also illustrated in excavation and after restoration in V. Sarianidi, *Necropolis of Gonur* (2007) 73 along with examples from graves 1028 and 1022 (p. 74) and 2900 (p. 153). As A. Benoit, *Revue du Louvre* (October, 2004) 38, noted, fragments had been found in controlled excavations elsewhere prior to the Gonur discovery. These included part of the body of one showing the fleece pattern of the *kaunakes*, from room 148 at Togolok 21, illustrated in F. Hiebert, *Origins of the Bronze Age oasis civilization in Central Asia* (Cambridge 1994) 150 and Fig. 9.12; and the removable hair piece or “steatite wig” of such a statue from Harappa, published in R. H. Meadow, *The chronological and cultural significance of a steatite wig from Harappa*, *Iranica Antiqua* 37 (2002) 191–202 Fig. 1. Since Benoit’s article appeared, yet another complete statuette from Nishapur, with removable arms and hands clenched in the same manner as we see on the Persepolis vessel, has been published. It was brought to light during excavations for a sewage well in the western part of the city in October, 1990. See R. A. L. Khaniki, *Neyshabur, a link among Mesopotamia, Indus Valley, Bactria and Iran (of Bronze Age)*, *Nāme-ye Paṣuḥešgāh-e Mirās-e Farhangi Quarterly* 1/1 (2003) 36–46 (in Persian). My thanks to M. Teufer for bringing this important article to my attention.



Fig. 14. Photograph of a modern impression of an Old Akkadian cylinder seal from Gonur Depe (after Kosarev/Kozhin/Dubova, *Near the sources of civilizations, back cover*).



Fig. 15. Photograph of a seated female statuette from grave 1799/2001 at Gonur Depe (after Rossi-Osmida, *Margiana*, 107).

mentary example was found in tomb 1028, while fragments of dress, arms and hair pieces were discovered in tombs 2655, 2780 and 2790⁴².

Until now these 'Bactrian' parallels seem only to have reinforced the conviction that the Persepolis vessel was genuine, without suggesting to those scholars who have written about it that it might have actually originated in Central Asia. Only Klochkov seems to have expressed the strong belief that the similarities between the *kaunakes*-wearing females on the Persepolis vessel and the *kaunakes*-wearing, seated female on

⁴² Sarianidi, *Necropolis of Gonur* (2007) 74–75.

the pin from Gonur, seemed too close to be coincidental. From this he inferred influence running from the Elamite world to Margiana, just as P. Amiet has suggested that the presence of *kaunakes*-clad females on 'Anšanite' cylinder seals and on AO 31881, the unprovenanced silver vessel in the Louvre, bespoke Elamite influence⁴³. Another perspective, however, is equally plausible. As the seated, *kaunakes*-wearing females of the sort seen on the Persepolis vessel is shown on the aforementioned composite steatite figures, as well as on a compartmented stamp seal and the silver pin from Gonur⁴⁴, it seems justifiable to suggest that the appearance of similar figures on 'Anšanite' seals reflects Bactrian or Margianan influence on Anšan rather than Elamite influence in Bactria and Margiana.

Another argument in favour of the Gonur vessel's Central Asian origin is its iconography. The Bactrian camel is well-represented on cylinder and stamp seals in the Bactria-Margiana region, e.g. at Togolok 1⁴⁵ and Togolok 21⁴⁶. A theriomorphic vessel and a grafitto of a Bactrian camel on a clay drain pipe were found in the 'palace' at Gonur Depe North⁴⁷ and the Bactrian camel was almost certainly in use as a draught animal in this region by the mid-/late-3rd millennium B.C.⁴⁸ As noted above, images of Bactrian camels were incised on the bases of at least five of the

⁴³ Amiet, *IrAnt* 15 (1980) 166; *L'âge des échanges*, 75; *Revue de Louvre* (2005/2) 36.

⁴⁴ For excellent new photos of these see Sarianidi, *Necropolis of Gonur* (2007) Figs. 54–59 (composite figures), 159 (seal) and 160–162 (pin).

⁴⁵ V. Sarianidi, *Myths of ancient Bactria and Margiana on its seals and amulets* (Moscow 1998) 296–297, no. 1635, from burial 10. Cf. G. Rossi-Osmida, *Findings of seals and amulets in the Margian area*, in: S. Winkelman, *Seals of the Oasis from the Ligabue Collection* (Florence 2004) 194, A35.

⁴⁶ Sarianidi, *Myths of ancient Bactria and Margiana*, 296–297, no. 1634, southern court of temple. Cf. V. Sarianidi, *Margiana and Protozoroastrism* (Athens 1998) Fig. 27.6.

⁴⁷ Sarianidi, *Margiana and Protozoroastrism*, Figs. 14.1 and 15.1.

⁴⁸ In addition to the terracotta models of wheeled carts drawn by Bactrian camels from Altyn Depe, e.g. P.L. Kohl, *Central Asia [Western Turkestan]: Neolithic to the Early Iron Age*, in: R. W. Ehrich (ed.), *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology* (Chicago 1992) 186, faunal remains of probable Bactrian camel have been recovered at Shor Depe, Chong Depe and Hapuz Depe. See B. Compagnoni/M. Tosi, *The camel: Its distribution and state of domestication in the Middle East during the third millennium B.C. in light of finds from Shahr-i Sokhta*, in: R. H. Meadow/M. A. Zeder (eds.), *Approaches to faunal analysis in the Middle East* (Cambridge 1978) Table 3. For the remains of Bactrian camels from Ulug Depe, Altyn Depe and Namazga Depe, see J. Peters/A. von den Driesch, *The two-humped camel (Camelus bactrianus): New light on its distribution, management and medical treatment in the past*, *Journal of Zoology* 242 (1997) 659. Cf. D. T. Potts, *Camel hybridization and the role of *Camelus bactrianus* in the Ancient Near East*, *JESHO* 47 (2004) 148–150.

gold and silver vessels from tomb 3220 at Gonur, and a silver pin from tomb 2900 terminates in a Bactrian camel⁴⁹.

To sum up, thus far, this paper has argued for the Oxus/BMAC origin of two similarly shaped silver vessels from Persepolis and Gonur Depe. In so doing, it has also argued that the *kaunakes*-clad females – whether in the form of compartmented stamp seals, silver pins, soft-stone figurines or *repoussé* figures on the Persepolis vessel – are also products of the Oxus/BMAC civilization. As a further corollary, it has been suggested that the Anšanite cylinder seal impressions and stamp seals from Tal-e Malyan showing similar females reveal the direct influence of Oxus/BMAC iconography on Anšan, rather than Elamite influence in Bactria and Margiana as previously maintained by several scholars.

The political and historical context of the evidence

These finds reflect a period of contact and inter-cultural communication between Elam/Anšan and Bactria/Margiana that lasted from the lifetime of Ur-Namma and Puzur-Inšušinak⁵⁰ – with whom the Persepolis vessel is linked by virtue of its Linear Elamite inscription – to the *suk-kalmah* or Kaftari/Old Babylonian period, when the Anšanite glyptic style flourished, or something over 200 years. The history of these contacts has already been discussed by a number of scholars, including P. Amiet, T. Potts and V. I. Sarianidi, but the discovery of the Gonur Depe silver vessel, and its clear link to the Persepolis vessel, suggest that they are worth re-examining. Given the fact that, for part of this period, Susa was under the control of the kings of Ur, we are justified in examining those contacts in the context of Ur's relationship with Susa, Elam, Anšan and more distant regions like Šimaški and Marhaši. The BMAC/Oxus iconography of the Persepolis silver vessel, coupled with its link to Puzur-Inšušinak by virtue of its Linear Elamite inscription, justify our beginning this interrogation of the Elamite/Anšanite relationship with Bactria/Margiana by focusing on Puzur-Inšušinak.

⁴⁹ Sarianidi, Goñurdepe, 197, Fig. 56; V.I. Sarianidi, Necropolis of Gonur, Fig. 30.

⁵⁰ A badly preserved Old Babylonian copy of an Ur III royal inscription from Isin confirms that Ur-Namma fought to liberate “Awal, Kismar, Maškan-šarrim, das Gebiet von Ešnunna, das Gebiet von Tutub, das Gebiet von Zimudar, das Gebiet von Akkade”, all of which Puzur-Inšušinak had previously conquered or attacked. See C. Wilcke, Altbabylonische Abschriften von Königsinschriften, in: B. Hrouda (ed.), Isin-Išān Baḥriyāt III (Munich 1987) 110.

A fragmentary statue of Puzur-Inšušinak (Sb 55), discovered at Susa in 1909⁵¹, bears a long inscription in Akkadian giving us the names of over 70 places that he conquered. There we read:

ll. 10–12 i 11–v 13: “when Kimaš and the land of Hu’urti became hostile against him (i.e. Puzur-Inšušinak), he went and captured his enemies, and he defeated Hupšana and sprinkled (?) donkey mare’s milk (over it?); in one day he made x towns fall prostrate at his feet; and when the king of Šimaški came and seized his feet (in submission), (then Inšušinak heard his prayers ...”⁵²

Although undated, André and Salvini considered this to be the first historical reference to Šimaški in the cuneiform record, one that fore-shadows the important role it would have in bringing about the downfall of the Third Dynasty of Ur⁵³. Recently, K. De Graef and P. Steinkeller have both made major contributions to the literature on Šimaški⁵⁴. Much discussion has surrounded the later Šimaškian leaders mentioned both in the so-called Šimaški King List and the Ur III sources, particularly Yabrat or Ebarat, but as the Yabrat documentation only commences in the year Šulgi 44, something on the order of half a century or more separates these sources and Puzur-Inšušinak’s account of the unnamed king of Šimaški’s submission to him in Sb 55. Ebarat’s short-lived domination of Susa probably occurred in the years Ibbi-Sin 4–8 but, as Steinkeller admits, “we are in total darkness as to where Ebarat ruled prior to those events”⁵⁵ and the same applies to the king of Šimaški who paid homage to Puzur-Inšušinak perhaps half a century or more earlier.

⁵¹ V. Scheil, *Textes élamites-sémitiques*, 5ème série, MDP 14 (1913) 7–16. Cf. I.J. Gelb/B. Kienast, *Die altakkadischen Königsinschriften des dritten Jahrtausends v. Chr.* FAOS 7 (Stuttgart 1990) 321–324.

⁵² The translation is that of P. Steinkeller, *On the identity of the toponym LÚ.SU(A)*, JAOS 108 (1988) 201, n. 31.

⁵³ André/Salvini, *IrAnt* 24 (1989) 71, “cette première citation historique, fait se profiler le rôle de premier plan que jouera, plus tard, dans la chute de l’Empire d’Ur, ce petit État qui commence à faire parler de lui”.

⁵⁴ On Šimaški see e.g. K. De Graef, *Ville Royale VIII. Les archives d’Igibuni: Les documents Ur III du Chantier B à Suse*, MDP 54 (2005) 91–118; *Les noms d’année du roi Simaškéen Ebarat I*, *Akkadica* 125 (2004) 107; *Ville Royale de Suse IX. De la Dynastie Simaški au sukkalmahat: Les documents fin PE IIB – Début PE III du Chantier B à Suse*, MDP 55 (2006) 43ff; *Annus Simaškensis: L’usage des noms d’année pendant la période Simaškéenne* (ca. 1930–1880 av. notre ère) à Suse, *IrAnt* 43 (2008) 67–87; and P. Steinkeller, *New light on Šimaški and its rulers*, *ZA* 97 (2007) 215–232. On Marhaši see D.T. Potts, *Exit Aratta: Southeastern Iran and the land of Marhaši*, *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* 4/1 (2004) 1–11; P. Steinkeller, *New light on Marhaši and its contacts with Makkan and Babylonia*, *Journal of Magan Studies* 1 (in press).

⁵⁵ Steinkeller, *ZA* 97 (2007) 223.

The location of Šimaški, of course, has been dealt with extensively by M. W. Stolper and F. Vallat, albeit with very different results. While Stolper suggested that ‘those parts of Šimaškian territory exposed to contact with Mesopotamian states lay among the valley systems to the north of Khuzistan and/or Fars’⁵⁶, Vallat identified Šimaški with the site and region of Shahdad in Kerman⁵⁷. Neither identification is based on incontrovertible proof. More recently, Steinkeller has reviewed the evidence, suggesting that “the Šimaškian territories extended as far as Anšan, while to the north, they bordered on the shores of the Caspian Sea. In the west, they appear to have reached deep into the Zagros ranges”⁵⁸ while the “eastern-most section of Šimaškian territories” lay “halfway between Tall-e Malyan (i.e. Anšan’s capital) and Huhnuri, which ... is very likely identical (or at least geographically associated) with ... Tappeh Bormi”⁵⁹.

Stolper’s identification relied in large part on a royal inscription of Šu-Sin’s commemorating his conquest of Šimaški⁶⁰. Of the six lands that constituted Šimaški, Stolper pointed out that Sigriš or Šigriš “is homonymous with a place located by Neo-Assyrian texts in Median territory”⁶¹. This, and the implied proximity of the Šimaškian territories to Ur’s sphere of military and political influence, were the primary reasons for suggesting a location in the Zagros to the north of Khuzestan and/or Fars, not too far from Mesopotamia. Vallat countered this suggestion by positing that the six lands of Šimaški could have included conquered clients of Šimaški, unrelated to its geographical epicentre⁶². One should also remember that Stolper cautiously framed his proposition by noting only that Šigriš was *homonymous* with a Median toponym. It is certainly

⁵⁶ Stolper, On the Dynasty of Šimaški, ZA 72 (1982) 46. Cf. R.C. Henrickson, Šimaški and Central Western Iran: The archaeological evidence, ZA 74 (1984) 98–122.

⁵⁷ Vallat, RGTC 11, CXXXIII

⁵⁸ Steinkeller, ZA 97 (2007) 217.

⁵⁹ Steinkeller, ZA 97 (2007) 223.

⁶⁰ D. O. Edzard, Neue Inschriften zur Geschichte von Ur III unter Šūsuen, AfO 19 (1959–60) 9. Cf. R. Kutscher, The Brockmon tablets at the University of Haifa: Royal inscriptions (Haifa 1989) 90, ii 14–34; D. Frayne, Ur III period (2112–2004 BC). RIME 3/2 (Toronto 1997) 303 [E3/2.1.4.3 ii 14–39], “the lands of Zabšali, from the border of Anšan to the Upper Sea, their rise, like locusts, Nibulmat, [X], Sigriš, Alu-middatim, Garta, Azahar, Bulma, Nušušmar, Nušganelum, Zizirtum, Arahir, Šatilu, Tirmium, and [X, he destroyed (?) ...]”. Cf. the Ur III year formulae for ŠS 7, “Year, Šu-Sin, the king of Ur, king of the four quarters, destroyed the land of Zabšali”, and ŠS 8, “Year after the year: the land of Zabšali was destroyed”.

⁶¹ Stolper, ZA 72 (1982) 45.

⁶² Vallat, RGTC 11, 243.

possible that the name, which Zadok considers pre-Iranian⁶³, occurred in more than one region.

Vallat's proposal, on the other hand, relied very much on the iconography of several cylinder seals, one of which was associated with Ebarat I or II, a king of the Šimaški dynasty⁶⁴. Steve and Vallat noted parallels for this material at Shahdad, which led them to identify this site with Šimaški. Although Steve suggested that this group of what he thought might be Šimaškian cylinder seals evidenced Harappan connections⁶⁵, it now seems clear that these Anšanite seals have nothing to do with Harappan or southeast Iranian glyptic.

But there is, perhaps, another way of coming at the problem of Šimaški's location. Steinkeller has recently shown that "Yabrat's earliest mention comes from a Puzriš-Dagan tablet, in which he is identified, together with an Anšanite named Hundah(i)šer, as a supplier of GÚ.URU×GU animals"⁶⁶. These, Steinkeller has ingeniously suggested, were Bactrian camels and "almost certainly ... a diplomatic gift for Šulgi"⁶⁷. As noted above, in discussing the iconography of the silver vessel from Gonur Depe, the Bactrian camel features prominently in the Oxus Civilization or BMAC – depicted on seals, precious metal pins, and in graffiti, and attested in the faunal record on sites in Bactria and Margiana as well. It is an iconic animal, associated in name with Bactria, not because it originated there⁶⁸, but because it was so widely employed in this region. Although Steinkeller suggested, "purely as an educated guess" that Yabrat's domain was "halfway between Tall-e Malyan (i.e., Anšan's capital) and Huhnuri"⁶⁹, there is no evidence, either osteological or iconographic – apart from the Persepolis vessel itself – for Bactrian camels in Fars or eastern Khuzestan (i.e. in the Ram Hormuz area, where Huhnur was located) in the late 3rd or early 2nd millennium B.C. For those, one must look further afield, specifically in Bactria and Margiana. No more Bactrian a gift could have been presented to Šulgi than a herd of Bactrian camels, and the fact that these ani-

⁶³ R. Zadok, The ethno-linguistic character of northwestern Iran and Kurdistan in the Neo-Assyrian period (Jaffa 2002) 76.

⁶⁴ Ebarat or Yabrat is the subject of a thorough new article, see Steinkeller, ZA 97 (2007) 215ff.

⁶⁵ M.-J. Steve, Des sceaux-cylindres de Simaški? RA 83 (1989) 13–26.

⁶⁶ For the text, see M. Hilgert, Drehem administrative documents from the reign of Šulgi. OIP 115 (Chicago 1998) 171.

⁶⁷ Steinkeller, ZA 97 (2007) 218 and 219, n. 16.

⁶⁸ Potts, JESHO 47 (2004) 148–150.

⁶⁹ Steinkeller, ZA 97 (2007) 223.

mals were presented by one of the ‘kings’ named in the Šīmaški king list is a strong indication that Šīmaški should be identified with the BMAC or Oxus civilization, where the Bactrian camel was at home in this period.

Finally, decades later, when Šu-Sin returned from his Šīmaškian campaign, he referred to governors (in the plural) whom he captured⁷⁰; to “established cities and villages”, the walls of which he razed; to the live-stock (cattle, sheep, goats, asses) that he took back to Ur; to gold, silver, copper, tin and bronze objects seized; to the mining of silver and gold in Zabšali; and that he “fashioned into an image of himself the [si]lver of the [l]ands of Šīmaški which he had taken as booty”⁷¹. In light of the large, walled settlements of the Oxus civilization, like Togolok 21, Dashly and Gonur Depe, and the significant quantity of luxury silver and gold vessels recovered by Sarianidi’s team in the Gonur North cemetery, such boasts seem entirely consistent with the archaeological reality revealed by recent discoveries in Bactria and Margiana.

It has been suggested that Šu-Sin’s campaign against Šīmaški was instrumental in setting in motion the social and political processes by which Šīmaški became a secondary state⁷². If the identification of Šīmaški with the Oxus civilization is correct – and the dating of the Gonur and Persepolis vessels, in view of the Linear Elamite inscription on the latter and the parallelisms noted between the two are sound – then it would appear that the complex civilization attested in Bactria and Margiana was already well-developed by the time of Šu-Sin’s attack, and the even earlier interaction between an unnamed Šīmaškian king and Puzur-Inšušinak.

From Ur to Šīmaški and Parthia to Susa

The Ur III messenger texts from Puzriš-Dagan contain numerous references to expenditures for messengers from both Marhaši and Šīmaški⁷³. Many years ago P. Steinkeller suggested that Marhaši was lo-

⁷⁰ De Graef, MDP 54, 110, emphasized the vastness and internal, political differentiation of the Zabšalian confederation, noting that Šu-Sin referred to “the great governors of the lands of Zabšali and the governors of the cities whom he had brought back from battle” as prisoners.

⁷¹ Frayne, *The Ur III Period*, 304–305.

⁷² Stolper, *On the dynasty of Šīmaški*, ZA 72 (1982) 51.

⁷³ The archaeology of Elam, Table 5.3 with refs; Total prestation in Marhashi-Ur relations, *Iran* 37 (2002) 341–355; P. Steinkeller, *New light on Marhaši and its con-*

cated in southeastern Iran (Tepe Yahya, Shahdad)⁷⁴, a suggestion that has become a virtual certainty in recent years thanks to new discoveries in the Jiroft region⁷⁵. The distance between Baghdad and Jiroft/Marhaši as the crow flies is c. 1371 kms. By comparison it is c. 1374 kms from Baghdad to Ashgabat/Šimaški in Turkmenistan. The distance between an Oxus/Murghab River-centred Šimaški and Ur is thus almost exactly the same as the distance between Ur and Marhaši.

Puzur-Inšušinak's connection with Šimaški provides a context in which the Persepolis silver vessel could have made its way from the Oxus region to Anšan, whether as a royal gift, booty or an object of trade. Half a century or more later Yabrat or Ebarat is thought to have presented 14 Bactrian camels (?) as a diplomatic gift to Šulgi, and in the year Šu-Sin 1 a group of Šimaškians swore allegiance to the Ur king⁷⁶. Finally, as discussed above, a major campaign in Šu-Sin 6 or 7 saw Ur in action against a large number of Šimaškian lands.

Early in the reign of Ibbi-Sin, however, an important development took place in Šimaški's relations with its western neighbours. As Steinkeller and De Graef have recently discussed, Yabrat/Ebarat I seized control of Susa⁷⁷. How long Yabrat/Ebarat had been in southwestern Iran by this point is unclear, but if the Central Asian location of Šimaški advocated here is correct, then we must explain how it was that he and his Šimaškian followers managed to move out of Šimaški itself and take control of Anšan and Susa, founding a dynasty whose kings are attested in both the Šimaškian King List and numerous Ur III and Isin-Larsa period texts⁷⁸.

tacts with Makkan and Babylonia, *Journal of Magan Studies* 1 (in press), courtesy of the author.

⁷⁴ Steinkeller, The question of Marhaši, *ZA* 72 (1982) 246ff. Based in part on the evidence of E. and H. Klengel, *Zum Fragment eines Steatitgefäßes mit einer Inschrift des Rimuš von Akkad*, *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 41 (1980) 45–51; H.-P. Francfort, *Fouilles de Shortugaï* (Paris 1989) 421, had previously suggested that the BMAC/Oxus Civilization might be identified with Marhaši.

⁷⁵ Cf. D.T. Potts, *Exit Aratta: Southeastern Iran and the land of Marhaši*, *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* 4/1 (2004) 1–11; In the beginning: Marhashi and the origins of Magan's ceramic industry in the third millennium BC, *AAE* 16 (2005) 67.

⁷⁶ M. Sigrist, *Drehem* (1992) 194–195.

⁷⁷ De Graef, *MDP* 54 (2005) 107–108. 112, suggests that the destruction of Ville Royale B level VII is probably attributable to Ebarat's conquest of Susa in IS 3, rather than Ibbi-Sin's attempts to re-take the city in years 9 and 14. Cf. P. Steinkeller, *Sale documents of the Ur-III-Period*, *FAOS* 17 (1989) 275; De Graef, *Akkadica* 125 (2004) 107. Note that W. Sallaberger, *OBO* 160/3 (1999) 173f., has expressed doubt about the veracity of Ibbi-Sin's campaigns against Susa.

⁷⁸ Potts, *The archaeology of Elam*, Table 5.5.

In fact, there is no shortage of analogous cases in Eurasian history of one group moving out of its home territory to set up a kingdom or empire in another region. The Seljuk Turks, for example, left Inner Asia, superimposing “a foreign ruling element upon an indigenous population whose elite were called upon to manage the affairs and organization of government and administration”⁷⁹, as did the Mongols in Iran. But there is another case that perhaps most closely recalls the transplantation of the ruling house of Šimaški from its native territory in Central Asia to Susa and Anšan.

In the mid-2nd century B.C. the Parthians moved out of their ancestral lands in Turkmenistan, and their capital Nisa near modern Ashgabat, and by 145 B.C. they had crossed Iran and occupied Susa. By 129 B.C. the Parthians had established their winter capital even further west, at Ctesiphon in Iraq. Similarly, I suggest that the Šimaškians, inhabitants of major settlements to the east of the Caspian Sea in what was later called Bactria and Margiana (coincidentally, not far from the Parthian homeland) moved into Susiana and Anšan⁸⁰, conquered Susa (and eventually Ur), imposed themselves on the local population, and established a ruling dynasty. The Šimaškians represent a classic case of an ‘ethno-classe dominante’⁸¹ that moved from its original homeland and established a state over another people (Susians, Elamites and Anšanites). This is consistent with De Graef’s observation, noted above, that the kings named in the Šimaški King List “appartiennent bien à la ‘famille’ de Simaški, mais ils n’ont pas régné successivement à Simaški”⁸². I suggest that, by the time Ibbi-Sin came to power, some Šimaškians, under Yabrat/Ebarat, were in control of southwestern Iran, and that their transplantation from the distant land of Šimaški to the ancient territories of Elam and Anšan mirrors, in a general way, the movement of the Parthians out of Central Asia into the same region roughly two millennia later.

Finally, I suggest that it was this infiltration of southwestern Iran by the Šimaškians which accounts for the iconographic influence of the Bactrian-Margiana seated females in *kaunakes* on ‘Anšanite’ style glyptic at Tal-e Malyan and Susa. The seated females in *kaunakes* – a feature of the

⁷⁹ C. L. Klausner, *The Seljuk vezirate: A study of civil administration, 1055–1194* (Cambridge 1973) 5.

⁸⁰ P. Steinkeller, *New light on Šimaški and its rulers*, ZA 97 (2007) 224, suggests that “Anšan was the focal point of the kingdom of Kindattu”.

⁸¹ P. Briant, *Ethno-classe dominante et populations soumises dans l’empire achéménide*, in: H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg/A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Achaemenid History III: Method and Theory* (1988) 137–173.

⁸² De Graef, MDP 55, 44.

Oxus Civilization at least since the time of Puzur-Inšušinak – now made their appearance on cylinder seals manufactured in Anšan and perhaps Susa. Further afield, the distribution of BMAC-type, or what I would call ‘Šimaškian’, artifacts at sites like Tepe Yahya, Shahdad, Khinaman, Susa, Quetta and Sibri⁸³ – zoomorphic bronze axes⁸⁴, soft-stone flasks with square bases and zig-zag-decorated soft-stone bowls⁸⁵ – can be understood as the product of close interaction between Šimaški and its southern neighbours in Anšan, Elam, Marhaši, Magan and Meluhha.

⁸³ E.g. M. Santoni, Sibri and the South Cemetery of Mehrgarh: Third millennium connections between the northern Kachi Plain (Pakistan) and Central Asia, in: B. Allchin (ed.), *South Asian Archaeology 1981* (1984) 52–60; J.-F. Jarrige/M.U. Hassan, Funerary complexes in Baluchistan at the end of the third millennium in the light of recent discoveries at Mehrgarh and Quetta, in: K. Frifelt/P. Sørensen (eds.), *South Asian Archaeology 1985* (1989) 150–166; Hiebert/Lamberg-Karlovsky, Central Asia and the Indo-Iranian borderlands; P.L. Kohl/M.-H. Pottier, ‘Central Asian’ materials from Baluchistan and southeastern Iran at the end of the third millennium B.C.: Some preliminary observations, *Persica* 14 (1990–1992) 91–102.

⁸⁴ Discussed particularly in Amiet, *L’âge des échanges* (Paris 1986) 155–156; T. Potts, *Mesopotamia and the East* (Oxford 1994) 169 ff.

⁸⁵ D. T. Potts, A soft-stone genre from southeastern Iran: ‘Zig-zag’ bowls from Magan to Margiana’, in: T. Potts/M. Roaf/D. Stein (eds.), *Ancient Near Eastern culture through objects: Festschrift for P.R.S. Moorey* (Oxford 2003) 77–91.